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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

BOOKS OF MEDIEVAL AND MODERN EUROPEAN HISTORY

The Golden Days of the Early English Church from the Arrival of Theodore to the Death of Bede. By Sir HENRY H. HOWORTH, K.C.I.E., D.C.L., F.R.S., F.S.A., President of the Royal Archaeological Institute and Trustee of the British Museum. In three volumes. (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. 1917. Pp. cxciv, 384; viii, 517; viii, 443. \$15.00.)

"It was many years ago", writes Sir Henry Howorth in the preface to his latest work, "when I used to discuss early English history with Mr. Freeman . . . that I formed the intention of some time trying to analyse its early sources and to unriddle its difficulties and obscurities in greater accordance with modern scientific methods than do some popular guides". Sir Henry soon discovered, however, that before the civil history of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms could be written, it would be necessary to explore more thoroughly the ecclesiastical history of the age. "This, then, explains the object and purpose with which, at the close of an exceptionally strenuous life . . . I have written five volumes of closely packed matter dealing with the beginnings of the English Church during less than a century and a half of its early career."

The first of these five volumes, a biography of *Saint Gregory the Great*, appeared in 1912. This was followed the next year by a life of *Augustine the Missionary*. The remaining three volumes have been published during the present year (1917) and profess to carry forward the narrative of early English church history "from the arrival of Theodore to the death of Bede". This period the author calls for no very evident reason *The Golden Days of the Early English Church*. It was no doubt an age of much missionary enthusiasm and constructive effort along Christian lines; but it was also a period of much pagan resistance without the new church and much pagan influence within; and, if we are to believe Bede, the closing years of this "golden age" gave evidence that the earlier fervor had passed away.

There can be no quarrel with the author's statement that his volumes are closely packed: they contain a vast amount of information, most of which appears to be reliable. But that the matter always relates to the history of the English church is not so evident; and it may also be doubted whether the work is in real accord with scientific methods. One is amazed to find that three volumes aggregating more than 1500 pages have been written about the Church in England during the years

from 669 to 735; but on closer examination it is found that Sir Henry's narrative is not so extended as it appears to be. About one-third of the first volume is made up of a lengthy preface and a somewhat longer introduction in which the author gives a critical discussion of the sources of the period under examination. The greater part of the third volume is given over to a series of extensive appendixes, notes, and corrections, and an index. Furthermore, the narrative of the first volume is largely introductory and deals with the generation before the coming of Theodore. If we were also to eliminate the materials that may be regarded as of doubtful relevance, the work would be reduced to quite reasonable limits. No doubt the student of Anglo-Saxon times should know the contemporary history of the Byzantine Empire and of the Frankish kingdom; perhaps conditions in England in the seventh century may be rendered more intelligible by a study of the monastic rules of Saint Basil, Saint Cassian, and others, or by accounts of the debates and decrees of church councils in Spain, Rome, and Constantinople; but ordinarily one does not look for all this information in the history of the missionary activities in far-away England. It is at best difficult to tell the story of the involved relations of the Old English kingdoms; but when a writer digresses as far and as freely as Sir Henry does, his account becomes very confusing.

A graver fault than the author's mode of presentation is a tendency to state a probability and later to treat this probability as an established fact. In discussing the marriage of Eadbald of Kent to his step-mother Bertha, Sir Henry concludes: "It would seem more probable that he apostatised, and possibly did so in order to marry Bertha" (I. 241). On the next page we read again of Eadbald and Bertha, "to secure whose hand he is said to have apostatised". In his account of the division of the bishopric of East Anglia by Archbishop Theodore, the author states his belief that "to this date . . . we may with every probability assign the remains of a primitive church, which still exist at South Elmham" (I. 310). Then follows a detailed description of this church closing with the following remark: "So much for the church founded by Theodore at South Elmham" (I. 316).

Sir Henry Howorth's long labors in this rather barren field have, however, not been wholly fruitless. His conclusions, though often based on flimsy or very slight evidence, are always interesting and often of real importance. He minimizes the importance of the Roman mission in the first half of the seventh century and places the emphasis where it seems to belong, on the activities of Saint Aidan and his Celtic associates. Though King Oswy at the synod of Whitby finally declared for the Roman view with respect to the Easter controversy, he continued faithful to the Celtic priesthood and a "persistent opponent of the Italian Church". Sir Henry also holds that the Celtic influence in the English Church persisted long after the debate at Whitby.

The work is naturally concerned very largely with the careers of the

great saints and churchmen of the age, Saint Oswald, Theodore of Tarsus, Saint Wilfrid, Saint Aldhelm, Saint Cuthbert, and the Venerable Bede. With the coming of Archbishop Theodore, Sir Henry believes an important Greek element was added to the ecclesiastical system of the Angles. With Saint Wilfrid and his ultramontane principles the author shows little sympathy; he also assumes a very critical attitude toward the work of Æddi, Wilfrid's famous biographer. For the Venerable Bede and his great history Sir Henry has profound respect; but he is inclined to believe that on several important points the great historian was in error, and that certain parts of the *Ecclesiastical History* in its present form were probably not written by Bede but are later interpolations.

In tracing the careers of the early English saints Sir Henry does not stop with their departure from this life but continues with lengthy accounts of their relics and the miracles that these are said to have performed. Thus about twenty pages are devoted to "the fate and doings of Oswald's remains after his death", and at least fifty to similar tales from the story of Saint Cuthbert. The reviewer wishes to question the propriety of filling the pages of what professes to be sober history with legendary materials; still, he appreciates the force of the author's retort that those who ignore the history of relics and "their reputations as magical and medieval remedies . . . fail to understand the very large place these things filled in the minds and imaginations of their ancestors in the seventh century".

LAURENCE M. LARSON.

Giordano Bruno: his Life, Thought, and Martyrdom. By WILLIAM BOULTING. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, and Company, Ltd.; New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. 1916. Pp. viii, 315. \$3.75.)

It is not an exaggeration to say that in the writings of Giordano Bruno, one of the most amazingly fertile of thinkers, are to be found the germs of all subsequent vital philosophic thought. But so saturated are his writings with the peculiar qualities of his impetuous personality that no cold rationalism may serve adequately to understand him. Sympathetic appreciation is here indispensable. Notable, then, is this book, not only because of its subject, but also because unmistakably its preparation and writing have been a work of solicitude of the heart as well as solicitude of the mind.

The book is admirable both in its plan and in its execution. There are chapters that deal with Bruno's birth and parentage, with his boyhood, and with his monastic life in the south; there is a satisfactory account of his early reading (in the classics, in the scholastics, in the Neo-Platonists, and in the writings of contemporary thinkers) and of his first wanderings, which were an inevitable consequence of that reading;